

# PECAN NEWS

## Pecan Growers Elect Three Texas Pecan Board Members

The 2020 Texas Pecan Board election for three members with terms to expire in 2026 was held on September 1 and ballots finalized on September 8 in Comanche County Judge Davis' courtroom by Patrick Dudley – TDA, Judge Davis, Mike Berry – CEA-Ag and Bob Whitney. Only **36 valid ballots** were cast out of potentially **265 Texas pecan farm families**.

Elected to the pecan board are Tami Sorrells of Comanche, Troy Swift of Lockhart and Joe Massey of San Antonio.



**Tami Sorrells** has served on the board for two terms and has served as the board's Secretary/Treasurer. She is a part of the Sorrells Farm Family pecan farm and retail store. She has a long history in the pecans business

including growing, shelling and manufacturing products for sale.

**Troy Swift** is new to the Texas Pecan Board but not new to pecans. Currently he runs Swift River Pecans near Lockhart which includes both native and improved pecan production. He has a retail store and his clientele include several local chefs. Troy is also known for his wood products including pecan wood. Troy is currently on the board of directors for the Texas Pecan Growers Association.



**Joe Massey** is new to the Texas Pecan Board but known to most Texas pecan growers having served many years on the Texas Pecan Growers Association Board and was a past President. Joe lives in San Antonio where he is active in several cattle businesses and his families pecan farm, located in Uvalde County.

New board members were officially sworn-in by Patrick Dudley with the Texas Department of Agriculture at the September 10th board meeting held in San Saba.

## Texas Pecan Board Elects Officers

Texas Pecan Board elections are held every two years to elect new board members and officer elections are held just after new board members are sworn-in. Officers elected for the September 2020 to September 2022 board term are President - **Larry Don Womack** of DeLeon, Vice President - **Rodney Myers** of Brownwood and Secretary/Treasurer - **Tami Sorrells** of Comanche.

## Your 2020-21 TPB Budget

The Texas Pecan Board operates on a Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 budget year which corresponds nicely to a normal pecan crop year. The board recently approved and submitted our current budget to TDA. Here are the numbers:

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**Income:** Pecan Assessments - \$134,000, Grant income - \$50,000, **Income Total - \$184,000.** **Expenses:** Administration - \$25,000, Pecan Promotion - \$120,000, Pecan Research - \$35,000, Assessment Refunds - \$12,000, **Expense Total - \$192,000.** Hopefully our small budget shortfall will be more than offset by a good pecan year!!



## Toasting Texas Pecan Month with Texas Wine

*Join a special virtual pecan and wine tasting to mark October as Texas Pecan and Texas Wine months*

As October marks Texas Pecan and Texas Wine months, the [Texas Pecan Board](#) invites Texans across the state to celebrate these two great agriculture products all month long. To celebrate, the Texas Pecan Board will be hosting a virtual pecan and wine tasting, in collaboration with [Texas Fine Wine](#), led by Sommelier Jessica Dupuy and Texas Culinary Expert and Food Historian Melissa Guerra on October 21, 2020, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

While pecans and wine are equally enjoyable on their own, they make a delicious duo when paired together. The virtual pecan and wine tasting, *A Toast to Texas Pecans*, will feature

Texas Pecan recipes and wine pairings to help wine and food enthusiasts get the most out of these authentically Texas products. The interactive session will make participants feel like they are in the room with Dupuy and Guerra as the two experts talk about what wine pairs with pecans and the rich history and ties each have with the state of Texas.

To participate in this exciting educational and delicious tasting, interested individuals simply purchase a tasting kit through Texas Fine Wine by Thursday, October 8, at [texasfinewine.com/upcoming-events](https://texasfinewine.com/upcoming-events). Each kit is approximately \$135 and includes 5 bottles of wine, a **1-pound bag of raw pecans**, and a tasting sheet, recipes and other information produced by the **Texas Pecan Board** to be used during the event. Featured wines include [Brennan Vineyards Viognier](#), [Duchman Family Winery Rose](#), [Spicewood Vineyards Tandem \(Syrah and Carignan\)](#), [Pedernales Cellars Tempranillo](#) and [Bending Branch Tempranillo](#). Once a kit is ordered, the purchaser will receive information confirming their kit will arrive in advance of the tasting, and they will receive an invite to the virtual tasting. **Tasting kits are on sale until October 8.** The kits could make a great gift for someone special!



The foundation of the collaboration is to develop strategic relationships and shared value between pecan growers and wine producers in the state of Texas. Individual pecan orchards and retail locations are encouraged to **partner** with local wineries to create regional tasting kit offerings for their community. For more information on **connecting with a winery** near you, please reach contact Mary Kimbrough at [mary.kimbrough@wildhive.com](mailto:mary.kimbrough@wildhive.com).

## HEB and Texas Pecans

Recently Wild Hive (TPB Marketing Partner) arranged for Larry Don Womack – TPB President, Shawn Oliver – Oliver Pecan and myself to host a ZOOM webinar for HEB Global Purchasing Managers. They were and are very interested in connecting with Texas pecans, Texas pecan culture and Texas pecan family farms. Larry Don and Shawn shared all about how pecans are grown, the struggles every farmer faces with weather, disease, insects and how pecan farming is a family affair. HEB is interested in buying Texas pecans and Texas pecan products for their stores but more specifically they are interested in tying the pecans they sell with the farm families who grow them.



One thing that stood out in the over 1 hour meeting was their interest in pecan varieties. They were interested to learn that different varieties have different looks, different tastes and even different nutrition. They are used to other nuts being “one size fits all” and they liked the fact that not all pecans are created equal.

Lastly, they were interested in the variety of products being produced from pecans. Pecan oil seems to be attracting a lot of attention (I hope you are using pecan oil instead of olive oil) and Shawn shared what he and others are doing to fill that demand. Flours, meal, “milk” and more where all discussed. It was a great time for us to learn more about a big company who buys and sells a lot of pecans and maybe it was a great time for them to learn more about the state nut of Texas - **Pecan!**

## TDA Awards \$25,000 ACES Grant to Texas Pecan Board

The intention of the Agriculture Commodity Export Support grant from TDA is to provide a baseline understanding of the **Mexican market for Texas pecans**. Given the geographic proximity and existing movement of product between the two countries, there is a desire to better understand where challenges and opportunities exist for in-shell and shelled product to go from Texas into the Mexican market, with a focus on how to develop pathways to increase consumer awareness of the diversity of the product for use as a healthy snack and key ingredient in recipes for all meals (not just dessert).

**Mexico was selected for several reasons.** First is the proximity to Texas, with a shared border and existing pecan movement across borders. Second is the perceived market space

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that exists for pecans at the retail level. There is no specific export plan at this time, as a desired



Wichita - while Texas is home to hundreds of varieties including natives – prized by Mexican chefs. This limited diversity of species and consumer options, coupled with the country's focus on exporting product rather than cultivating domestic consumption, creates space for Texas pecans to find a home in Mexico.

Lastly, Mexico City is fast becoming world renowned as a destination for food. Mexico City chefs are looking for quality ingredients for their prized dishes. Texas Pecans are known for their versatility and taste and work well with the richest foods and the best wines!

outcome of this grant would be the ability to develop specific strategies and tactics to reach Mexican consumers.

At first, Mexico may seem like a strange market for Texas pecans - but let's dig deeper to see several reasons the market has potential.

Mexico is a net exporter of pecans; they produce 48% of the global supply, followed closely by the U.S.'s 46% production level. But Mexico's pecan production faces extensive near-term challenges due to looming water shortages (a recent article by AP details the issue around La Boquilla dam above the Mexican pecan production area) and land pressures. This projected decline will mean more space globally for Texas pecans. As a producer, Mexico mainly grows two varieties of pecans - Western and

## \$22,000 TDA Specialty Crop Grant Identifying Pecan Management Benchmarks

The Texas Pecan Board and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has been awarded a grant, “Identifying Management Benchmarks for Profitable Pecan Production in Texas.” The purpose of this project is to identify production and financial benchmarks for pecan growers in order to sharpen management targets and goals and communicate those critical performance measures to Texas pecan growers. Collecting and examining the production and financial performance of many pecan growers can help identify characteristics or factors that are true of the financially successful producer, as well as those characteristics of the financially stressed. This work will be done over the next 10 months and shared with growers to help improve pecan management in Texas.

*If you have any comments or questions about pecan production, pecan projects or TPB programs please don't hesitate to call or email. Bob Whitney, 979.571.2086 or bob@texaspecanboard.com*

